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Chairman: Mr. KHAN (Pakistan)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 105: REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS (A/C.2/49/5 and A/49/336)

1. The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to a letter dated 10 October 1994 from the President of the General Assembly to the Chairman of the Second Committee (A/C.2/49/5), and suggested that any delegation that had comments on the Secretary General's report on the restructuring of the Secretariat (A/49/336) should submit them, in writing, to him [the Chairman]; he would ensure that they were transmitted to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee. If he heard no objection, he would take it that that procedure was acceptable to the Second Committee.

2. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 90: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (A/49/71, A/49/133-E/1994/49 and Add.1, A/49/204-E/1994/90, A/49/205-E/1994/91, A/49/256, A/49/326, A/49/381 and A/49/462 and Corr.1)

3. Mr. JOLLY (Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) said that, as pointed out in the Secretary General's report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 45/217 on the World Summit for Children (A/49/326), the Summit had already helped produce highly significant results at the national and international levels. Over the past 10 years, infant deaths from neonatal tetanus had dropped from one million a year to just over half a million and there had been no cases of polio registered in the western hemisphere for the past three years. Moreover, impressive progress had been made in reducing the incidence of measles and guinea worm disease.

4. Such progress had been attributable to United Nations cooperation with Governments, non-governmental organizations, and United Nations bodies at the field level, and to the preparation of national programmes of action, which adapted the global commitments to the specific situation of each country. Ninety-three national programmes of action had been finalized and many more were currently in draft or in preparation. Eighty per cent of the world's children lived in countries where a national programme of action had been completed, and 90 per cent lived in countries where there was a national programme of action in draft or in preparation, or in which a national programme of action had been completed. That provided the framework for practical commitments at the country level, which must then be monitored.

5. The World Summit for Children had originally focused on goals for the year 2000. Subsequently, goals had also been set for 1995, and it had been found that the preparation of mid-decade goals served as a stimulus for the achievement of those goals. It had also been found that the transition from a national programme of action to programmes of action for provinces or major cities was an important way of making the reality of the commitments very visible to those responsible for their implementation. Some 50 countries had

decentralized their national programmes of action, and another 26 countries were currently in the process of doing so.

6. If the World Summit for Social Development was to live up to expectations, serious attention should be given to a follow-up process, which could draw on the experience of the World Summit for Children. Preparations for the World Summit for Social Development should focus on a few clear goals that could subsequently be used as the basis for national programmes of action and national follow-up action by different parts of the United Nations. National programmes of action should not involve Governments alone but should stimulate a national process that would mobilize all sectors of society. Civil society in the follow-up to the World Summit for Children had been just as important as formal government action. It was also important to monitor the progress of the World Summit for Social Development, which could be based on the procedure adopted for monitoring the progress of the World Summit for Children.

7. In their field operations, all parts of the United Nations should be committed to practical action in support of the goals of the World Summit for Children. UNICEF had found that the clear goals of the Summit had served as a stimulus for what its own country officers should be doing in support of Governments and, in many cases, non-governmental organizations to follow-up the goals agreed in 1990. Something of that process could also be used to stimulate efforts to revive the practical impact of the United Nations at the country level.

8. Mr. RAMOUL (Algeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, noted with regret that implementation of those provisions of General Assembly resolution 48/162 which concerned the financing of operational activities had not aroused the same enthusiasm as had the aspects concerning reform of the composition, size and management of the executive boards of funds and programmes. Such a selective approach ran counter to the consensus established at the outset that reform should contribute to the revitalization of operational activities.

9. Noting that efforts were being made within the UNDP Executive Board to identify ways to implement the new concept of the mission and role of UNDP through a refocusing of activities on four priority areas, namely, poverty eradication, women in development, job creation and environmental protection, he said that the Group of 77 and China felt that any change in approach should be based on the earlier consensus concerning multilateral development cooperation. Operationalization of the four priority areas should take place through an integrated approach to sustained economic growth and the overall development of the recipient countries in accordance with their national priorities and objectives.

10. As had been reaffirmed by General Assembly resolutions 44/211, 47/199 and 48/162, the fundamental characteristics of the operational activities of the United Nations system should be their neutrality and grant nature. The increasing tendency to impose political considerations or to introduce new concepts as conditions of access to resources was a matter of concern.

11. The contribution of the specialized agencies to the development of the countries of the South had been invaluable; it had been particularly helpful in enabling those countries to gain access to training, transfer of technology and know-how. The scarcity of UNDP resources, however, added to the implementation of new support-cost arrangements, had aggravated the agencies' financial difficulties and affected their ability to intervene in developing countries. If that situation were to continue, several of the specialized agencies could disappear. The Group of 77 and China, therefore, fully supported the relevant recommendations contained in the report of the independent external evaluators on support costs.

12. Because of the sharp drop in official development assistance, coupled with a substantial reduction in its core resources, UNDP had revised and lowered its indicative planning figures (IPF) for the fifth programming cycle and had been forced to borrow against the resources for the next programming cycle. The discussions of the newly established working group which would study modalities or mechanisms to increase substantially financial resources for operational activities should not go beyond the mandate outlined in resolution 48/162; in any event it must complete its work by the end of the forty-ninth session.

13. While the Secretary-General's desire to increase the efficiency of the United Nations in the areas of development and international economic cooperation was understandable, the representative of Algeria drew attention to paragraph 19 of the Ministerial Declaration of the Group of 77 (A/49/462) which referred to the need for institutions that were involved in implementation of financial and technical cooperation programmes to be distinct from those involved in overall policy-making and coordination.

14. Mr. CARMICHAEL (Canada), speaking on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand, said that the adoption of resolution 48/162 had led to substantive changes in the functioning of the Economic and Social Council and the executive boards of the United Nations development agencies, and had generated much discussion on the financing of development. There was a definite link between the triennial review of operational activities and that reform process. The momentum generated by resolutions 47/199 and 48/162 must be maintained, along with improved coordination of development efforts throughout the United Nations system.

15. The new responsibilities assigned to the Administrator of UNDP for ensuring policy coherence and enhancing coordination within the United Nations system should help to strengthen the linkages between emergency assistance, rehabilitation and long-term development, as a headquarters-level reflection of the dual roles of resident representatives and resident coordinators undertaken by individuals in the field. The country strategy note also had an important role to play in coordination. The elaborating of the note could be a time-consuming process, but in the vast majority of cases it made a substantial difference in effective targeting of development programmes. In an effort further to harmonize the work of the various executive boards, the agencies might experiment with joint country programme presentations to combined board meetings. That practice would provide a more comprehensive understanding of all

specialized agency activities in a single country. Efforts to harmonize the presentation of budgets and accounts in order to improve financial transparency and comparability were welcome. Coordination was a key operational principle of United Nations funds, programmes and agencies; it was also required of the members of the various executive boards.

16. Turning to the overall impact of the United Nations development system, the ability of agencies to demonstrate measurable progress towards specified goals was an integral part of achieving sustained financial support from Member States and in setting realistic priorities. The important linkages relating to peace-building must also be addressed. United Nations development organizations must increase their focus on preventing humanitarian emergencies by assisting Governments in building the social, economic and environmental foundations for peace. Joint evaluations of the impact of activities in a specific sector or field might yield particular benefit, would be cost-effective and would encourage harmonization of programming, beginning at the planning stage.

17. The Resident Coordinators held key positions in the United Nations development system, and the selection of the right individuals to fill those positions was crucial and deserving of serious attention.

18. Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Russian Federation) said that the questions of security and sustainable development were closely related and called for a comprehensive, integrated and universal approach to problems of international cooperation, an approach that would take full account of economic, environmental, technological, demographic and other factors. Joint action in those areas should have as their final goal the harmonious and safe development of the human personality, the satisfaction of basic human needs and guarantees of rights and freedoms, all of which were part of sustainable human development. Those goals and principles should be the basis of United Nations operational activities and serve as guidelines in the process of reforming such activities in the general context of the restructuring of the Organization's social and economic sectors.

19. The individualized programme approach, when coordinated with national plans and priorities, provided new opportunities to improve the effectiveness of technical cooperation. His delegation was pleased at the progress that had been achieved in that area by UNDP, UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). In order to increase national execution, greater efforts should be made to develop national capacities in recipient countries.

20. It was important to continue to improve inter-agency cooperation and coordination at both headquarters and field levels. That called for an enhanced coordinating role of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy and the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC). The role of resident coordinators should also be strengthened. Field coordinating committees, which brought together representatives of various organizations of the United Nations system should be strengthened and the programme cycles of the various organizations should be harmonized; in addition the mechanism for preparing country strategies for using

external assistance, should be improved with the active participation of United Nations field representatives and resident coordinators.

21. His delegation supported the efforts of UNICEF to assist countries in preparing national programmes of action for children and create and strengthen national capacities and institutions capable of improving the situation of children and defending their rights. Support should be given to the Fund in its efforts to achieve the mid-decade goals of the World Summit for Children. The Russian Federation was committed to achieving the goals of the Summit and a national plan of action would be submitted to the Government by the end of the year.

22. One of the most important conditions for the success of United Nations operational activities for development was the observance of its universal mandate. His delegation welcomed the useful activities of UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA in the area of economies in transition, which supported the efforts of countries to carry out their own social and economic reforms. In the light of the extremely limited resources allocated for assistance to countries with economies in transition, efforts should be made to mobilize additional resources from diverse sources, which included the private sector. His delegation welcomed the decision adopted at the second regular session of the UNICEF Governing Council on the development of a regional strategy and programme of regional technical assistance to supplement the Fund's activities at the country level, and on the strengthening of the Fund's capacity at both the headquarters and country levels.

23. In a number of cases, UNDP resources should be used as "seed money" to generate other resources, and the Programme itself should encourage efforts to attract such resources, including resources from the private sector. The achievement of that goal would help transform the Division for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States into a regional bureau. His delegation had repeatedly drawn attention to that matter and considered that UNDP should take a positive decision in that area in the very near future. Any attempt to isolate the division or make only superficial changes would be contrary to the principle of universality of UNDP and would prevent the Programme from carrying out activities in Eastern Europe and the countries of the former Soviet Union to its full capacity.

24. Mr. GOUMENNY (Ukraine) said that the concept of sustainable human development could serve as a good basis for making United Nations bodies involved in operational activities a reliable instrument for achieving peace, democracy and development. Such bodies should, in particular, coordinate human development priorities with environmental, economic, social and political sustainability. At the same time, international cooperation for development should be in keeping with national goals and the interests of recipient countries. Operational activities could be improved by making greater use of the programme approach and national execution in project implementation in recipient countries. Technical assistance should become an organic part of national development programmes and help build national capacities.

25. In recent years, the significant decline in resources for operational activities for development had become a source of serious concern, since the United Nations could not meet its development assistance goals without an adequate and stable level of resources.

26. Only a very insignificant part of United Nations annual expenditure for development was used to carry out projects in countries with economies in transition. In preparing the guidelines for its sixth programming cycle, UNDP should allocate a level of resources that would be more in keeping with the needs of such countries, in particular, Ukraine. Such allocations should not be made at the expense of the developing countries.

27. Ukraine's transition to a market economy had been particularly painful. Over the past three years, Ukraine's national income had fallen by almost 40 per cent. In order to ensure its economic survival, Ukraine would have to stabilize its monetary system, restructure its taxation system and carry out reforms in the areas of banking and property. In carrying out those tasks, Ukraine would rely primarily on its own strengths and the industriousness of its people. However, it also valued external support for its efforts, in particular, the increased attention of UNDP and UNICEF to its transition to a market economy. His delegation hoped that Ukraine's cooperation with those agencies, as well as with other United Nations organizations involved in operational activities, would continue to expand.

28. Over the past few years, the UNDP office in Ukraine had been successfully carrying out a number of projects in spite of the low level of resources. The Government of Ukraine attached great importance to technical assistance it received to help it improve its management capacity, carry out administrative reforms, strengthen its health care and radiological infrastructure, become part of the Internet information system, and implement its programme for the settlement of the Crimean Tatars and other national minorities in the Crimea. Ukraine hoped that donor countries and international financial institutions would participate more actively in its projects.

29. UNDP should strengthen the necessary organizational structures needed to carry out its activities in countries with economies in transition. In particular, the Programme should transform its Division for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States into a regional bureau.

30. The improvement of the effectiveness of operational activities would in large part depend on the degree to which such activities were coordinated at the political, inter-agency and country levels. His delegation welcomed the new format for discussing operational activities at the recent substantive session of the Economic and Social Council. An improvement in inter-agency coordination would undoubtedly provide new opportunities for the sound use of existing resources for development purposes. In that regard, it was important to make full use of the potential of ACC.

31. Mr. HENZE (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union and Austria, said that, donor Governments might find more internal support for channelling

funds through the United Nations if there was more transparency, increased efficiency and better coordination throughout the system.

32. The European Union had drawn attention at the recent substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, to the need to further strengthen implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199 and to the special importance it attached to the country strategy note, the programme approach, the resident coordinator system, decentralization of activities to the field, common United Nations premises and the harmonization of programming cycles. In its view, there was no need for another General Assembly resolution on the subject, since the work on operational activities had already been completed during the Economic and Social Council session.

33. The European Union noted with interest the Secretary-General's request that the Administrator of UNDP should assist in improving overall coordination within the United Nations in the development field. Such a step would improve the operational activities system by introducing stronger guidance and better coordination and would also strengthen the resident coordinator system. The new governance structures for the funds and programmes appeared to be making good progress, although some improvements would be needed to maintain the momentum of the reform process and a clear-cut division of labour between the executive boards, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

34. The operationalization of an Agenda for Development would have major implications for operational activities. Member States in a dialogue among themselves and with the Secretary-General would decide on the future organizational structure and substance of United Nations technical assistance. In that context, and in the light of the importance that it attached to UNICEF, the European Union considered that the next Executive Director of the Fund should be a European, that would reflect the level of support these countries provided to UNICEF.

35. Mr. SWETJA (Indonesia) said that the Secretary-General, in his report on the work of the Organization (A/49/1), had stated that it was the task of the world community to redefine and bring to fulfilment the idea of development as a long-term solution to the root causes of conflict. His delegation believed, however, that the emerging concept of human-centred development together with a strong emphasis on economic growth was already accepted, and that a time-consuming redefinition of development would not be required. It was urgent, however, that the concept of development should be translated into practice within the framework of operational activities for development.

36. Two years had passed since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 47/199 on the triennial policy review. Whereas demand for operational activities for development continued to increase, there had been a sharp unprecedented downturn in available financial resources. If that situation persisted, the ability of the United Nations development system to discharge its mandate would be severely jeopardized. Concrete action and renewed commitments by the developed countries were, therefore, of particular importance. A new funding mechanism for operational activities must be created in order to ensure

predictability and continuity in resource flows. Despite efforts to increase efficiency, the administrative costs of programme delivery continued to increase. Current efforts to streamline and enhance coordination of operational activities could help to strengthen their capabilities and to provide increased funding.

37. In order to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of project execution, procurement of expertise and equipment at field level should be fully decentralized, as recommended in paragraph 27 of General Assembly resolution 47/199. It was encouraging, in that respect, that national execution and the use of national expertise for UNDP programmes had increased significantly during 1993. Further improvements in those areas would contribute to efforts towards making recipient countries more self-reliant, which was the ultimate goal of operational activities for development.

38. Mr. KHAN (Bangladesh) said that programmes under operational activities must be made more responsive to national priorities and national planning authorities must become more involved in the planning and execution of such programmes. Thus, more attention must be paid to the enhancement of national capacity. In the formulation and implementation of projects at field level, priority should be placed on maximum utilization of local expertise. Resident coordinators had a crucial responsibility to provide leadership, but Governments must retain direct access to programmes, funds and expertise. While the programmes must allow for some flexibility, essentially, they must reflect a country's national goals and objectives.

39. In order to help Governments pursue their development objectives, the Resident Coordinator might also coordinate the humanitarian assistance of the United Nations system but without any political function whatsoever as that would undermine his neutrality and effectiveness at the field level.

40. There was growing concern that the United Nations was according more importance to conflict resolution and short-term humanitarian relief activities than to the development which alone could provide a sound basis for international peace and security.

41. Noting with concern that resources for operational activities continued to fall far short of actual requirements, he said that that situation was the result of a lack of political will and resolve on the international community's part. It was equally regrettable that, overall, the flow of official development assistance had declined in recent years. In that connection, the operational activities of the United Nations system should devote particular attention as well as new and additional resources to the least developed countries.

42. Before considering any new concept, the Committee should try to look into ways and means of strengthening the present mechanism and procedures of United Nations operational activities particularly within the framework of resolutions 47/199 and 48/162.

43. Mr. TALPUR (Pakistan) said that any discussion of the operational activities of the system must take into account the fact that the developing world represented a landscape that varied from fast-growing, highly productive economies to those trapped in the vicious circle of poverty. While all developing countries would continue to need the high-quality technical advice provided by the United Nations system, the nature of the demand for developmental inputs from the United Nations system had changed. In future, the United Nations should focus its activities on areas where it was most needed and where bilateral and other multilateral assistance was not easily available. Moreover, in the economic and social field, the United Nations system had also been transformed as a result of planned and unplanned restructuring. The level of resources at the disposal of the system for operational activities had stagnated and the level of political commitment to the noble goals which had inspired those activities was in question.

44. It was a matter of concern that resources for United Nations development activities had been declining steadily and were becoming increasingly unpredictable. Paradoxically, at a time when the need for grant assistance had become critical, there had been greater reluctance on the part of donors to provide funding to the United Nations system.

45. Mr. AL-HABIB (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that much more should be done to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness of the United Nations operational activities. Full implementation of resolution 47/199 required increased coordination of the United Nations network of field offices, harmonization of programmes and cycles, adoption of a programme approach, more personnel at headquarters and in the field and increased financial support for United Nations development activities. In recent years, there had been a growing imbalance between the resources allocated to development activity and those spent on other activities, such as peace-keeping and emergency assistance.

46. It was essential to preserve the neutral and universal nature of operational activities for development and to ensure that they were not influenced by political considerations. Finally, United Nations operational activities in a country should be in keeping with considerations of the country's national plans and priorities. While his country supported the strengthening of the resident coordinator system, it strongly believed that the authority of the Resident Coordinators should not exceed what had been defined by the General Assembly.

47. Mr. SALANDER (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries, said that the commitment that had been made at the World Summit for Children must be transformed into reality. In that regard, while the majority of countries had already formulated national plans of action, one of the most important steps in the process, such plans should be reflected in the political and financial decisions of Governments. It was also important to involve a broad spectrum of actors including the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations in the process.

48. The aim was not simply to achieve a given quantitative target in a specific year. Results must be measured in terms of whether the improvement could be sustained over a period of time so as to ensure the well-being of children, who were the future. Consequently, clear and broad-based action was required in many areas: the promotion of democracy and human rights and, with particular respect to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in the areas of poverty, environment, education and health.

49. The Nordic countries strongly supported the important work of UNICEF in the follow-up to the Summit. As major donors to the activities of UNICEF, the Nordic countries had endeavoured to contribute to the developing countries' efforts to achieve the goals set out by the Summit. Other organs and bodies of the United Nations system should also play a role in promoting, within their specific competence, the enhancement of the situation of children.

50. Mr. GAMZOU (Israel), noting the progress made in achieving the goals of the World Summit for Children, said that much work remained to be done. Beyond the chronic problems, acute crises such as the one in Rwanda had demanded extra efforts on the part of the international community. Israeli doctors, including paediatricians, who had manned the field hospital established by Israel, had treated hundreds of refugees, the majority of whom were orphaned children. The terrible tragedy in Rwanda had once again demonstrated that children were the most vulnerable victims of the horrors of war.

51. His country, which attached considerable importance to the protection of children, had promulgated comprehensive legislation which protected children and guaranteed their rights in areas such as the family, education, employment, health and welfare. Non-governmental organizations also played a crucial role in protecting rights of children; indeed, they had been instrumental in the establishment by the National Council for Children of the important post of Ombudsman for Children and Youth. Israel also attached great importance to international cooperation in promoting the welfare of children and looked forward to sharing its experience and achievements in education and children's health with all interested parties, including its Arab neighbours. He hoped that the historic changes taking place in the Middle East would bring about a lasting peace so that children would no longer have to lose their lives in their parents' conflicts.

52. Mr. HOPE (United States of America) underscored the importance which his delegation attached to efficient coordination within the United Nations system and said that by improving coordination, efficiency and effectiveness in aid delivery, the United Nations system could help to secure resources from donors on a more predictable basis. It was important to evaluate the institutions of the system according to their comparative advantages and to eliminate programmes and expenditures of marginal value in achieving an integrated approach to problem solving.

53. General Assembly resolution 47/199 represented an important step towards increased cooperation and coordination and his delegation attached particular importance to the development of the country strategy note as the policy

framework for country programming and for the inclusion of all relevant partners in the planning process. The United Nations system had made progress towards improved complementarity in response to General Assembly resolution 48/162. The objectives of increased coordination and the elimination of redundancy should be examined further in the context of the triennial policy review of operational activities for development.

54. He could not comment on document A/49/326 because there had not been sufficient time to review it thoroughly. His delegation was committed to achieving the goals of the World Summit for Children through domestic programmes in his own country, and through bilateral aid and assistance to United Nations agencies to assist other countries. The Summit had provided guidelines for countries to utilize in reviewing their own situations and developing appropriate programmes of action.

55. In conclusion, he said that issues such as strengthening coordination and increasing collaboration within the United Nations system should be substantively addressed in the discussion of an agenda for development.

56. Mr. SHINODA (Japan) said that his delegation was disappointed that the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 45/217 on the World Summit for Children (A/49/326) had been issued only the preceding day and hoped that in the future all necessary papers would be distributed in a timely manner so that delegations could properly prepare for deliberations.

57. His delegation disagreed with the statement in paragraph 62 that the application of the 20/20 concept to "both bilateral and multilateral cooperation need not await prolonged technical discussions". While it supported the concept, it believed that since the needs of developing countries varied considerably, the concept might not be universally applicable; moreover, that view also had been expressed in the Executive Board of UNICEF. Paragraph 62 should be revised accordingly.

58. Mr. Hong Jae IM (Republic of Korea) said that, at a time when resources for development were decreasing while needs were soaring, the coordination of operational activities at the field level was essential, since it was in the field that the United Nations was best able to respond to specific development needs and operational activities could be most effectively evaluated. However, the functional decentralization of the specialized agencies, while a source of strength, had also caused significant problems with respect to coordination at the operational, administrative, staffing and financial levels.

59. One way to begin the arduous task of improving coordination was to strengthen the role of the resident coordinator in order to ensure the coordination of all operational activities for development, starting with the funds and programmes of the United Nations system and, as time went on, including the specialized agencies in the process.

60. The enhancement of the resident coordinator's role must proceed in full accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/199, and his delegation cautioned against extending that role to non-traditional areas such as human rights and preventive diplomacy. Accordingly, it did not agree with the Joint Inspection Unit that a political function should be incorporated in the mandate of the resident coordinator.

61. His delegation welcomed the decision of the Secretary-General to entrust the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with new responsibilities in order to help him enhance policy coherence within the United Nations system and the overall coordination of operational activities for development. In the light of the broad-based and comprehensive concept of development that had emerged, the United Nations must strengthen its role by adopting a new approach which would effectively respond to the changing needs of developing countries.

62. Mr. ZENA (Ethiopia) said that the adoption of General Assembly resolutions 47/199 and 48/162 had strengthened the coordination of the operational activities of the United Nations system to some extent. His delegation welcomed the shift to the programme approach and to national execution and agreed that national capacity-building should be given the highest priority.

63. His delegation was pleased to acknowledge the important role played by various components of the United Nations system in helping to address the needs and aspirations of his country. He provided an overview of the assistance provided to his country by the United Nations system, noting that the overwhelming development priority was to achieve national food security through increased crop production. His Government commended the United Nations funds and programmes for carrying out their activities with limited resources.

64. The need to strengthen the function of the resident coordinator system should continue to receive priority attention as efforts to enhance coordination within the United Nations system proceeded. However, to assign the resident coordinator responsibilities additional to those related to development was not in the best interest of the developing countries and would not enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of United Nations development activities at the field level.

65. Mr. SINGH (India) inquired whether the Human Development Report had in fact been prepared by UNDP or by an independent group of experts.

66. With regard to paragraph 62 of the Secretary-General's report (A/49/326), he wished to know whether those who had prepared the report were aware that the concept of 20/20 had not been endorsed by the Group of 77 in its discussion of the preparations for the World Summit for Social Development and that it had been stated at the International Conference on Population and Development that the concept needed further discussion. He therefore wished to know how, in the absence of an intergovernmental mandate, it could be asserted that the implementation of the concept "need not await prolonged technical discussions".

67. Mr. ALTESMAN (United Nations Children's Fund) said that paragraph 62 referred to a technical discussion, whereas it was his understanding that the representative of India had in mind a political discussion. If that clarification did not help, further technical discussions could be undertaken.

68. He assured delegations that their expressions of support and insightful advice regarding the implementation of General Assembly resolution 45/217 on the World Summit for Children would prove very useful to UNICEF and its partners. The concerns expressed regarding impact and the need for a concerted effort were particularly pertinent.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.